



STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305

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STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Department of Genetics
(415) 497-5052

COPY

Mr. Peter J. Herman
Administrative Assistant to
Senator Arlen Gregorio
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Herman,

Thank you for your letter of September 14th and for the copy of Dr. Parkinson's letter of August 31st.

The factual answers to the questions that were given to Dr. Parkinson are no different than what I would have replied myself. However, as I told you over the phone, I believe they constitute a distortion of my proposal, and to put the questions in this way has clearly served to undermine the case that I was trying to make. I was in no way asking for a blanket exemption from safety practices for using small quantities nor would I have implied that small amounts of carcinogens per se could be disregarded.

The entire emphasis of my concern and proposal was the utter inappropriateness of using an industrial-tonnage standard for safe handling of these chemicals in the context of the academic research laboratory. Safe practice standards certainly will have to be developed for this context and they surely will have to be very different than those applied to large-scale industry or else all chemical research will grind to a halt! In fact, it may also become very difficult for the laboratories of the Department of Health to continue to fulfill their analytical responsibilities if the same standards are applied to them.

As I told you, the compounds on the present list do not pose such grave problems; if, however, as appears to be imminent, solvents like chloroform are added to the list, the situation will clearly become intolerable!

Yes, you did indicate that it would be possible to obtain a variance. But I wonder if you have contemplated the cost of going through these bureaucratic procedures and the impediment that they undoubtedly will impose on continuing to do scientific work. That is why I had hoped we might find some more streamline procedures to meet aims and ends that I think we do agree upon.

At the very minimum I hope that under the aegis of the new law it may be possible to conduct hearings at the earliest possible moment with respect to establishing a general variance to apply to the circumstances I have just indicated. Or will it be necessary for every laboratory and every institution to hire a new cadre of lawyers in order to pursue these exigent requirements?

- 2 -

L.T. J. P. KENNEDY, JR. LABORATORIES FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE, DEDICATED TO RESEARCH IN MENTAL RETARDATION

MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

HEREDITY

NEUROBIOLOGY

DEVELOPMENTAL MEDICINE

HERMAN, Peter

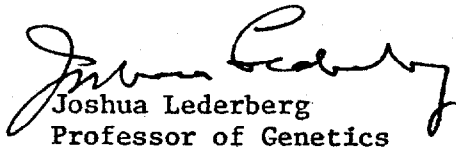
9/23/76

I have had a long history of experience of concern about chemicals in the environment and the role of "carcinogens" therein. However, I am afraid that the word is being picked up as a scare item, sometimes out of proportion to its actual implication for public health. The day that you proposed to treat cigarettes - not as an important public health issue but as a subject for regulation requiring protective clothing, special fume hoods and so forth, that will be the day that I believe that you will understand the full dimensions of this problem. After all, cigarettes are also "suspected carcinogens", and I wonder what the statistical report given by Dr. Parkinson would look like if it had included this product.

I wonder if you are aware also that alcohol is a "suspected carcinogen" although I do not expect this to appear promptly on any legal prescribed list.

I have used this parody not to diminish the concern that ought to be applied to many very dangerous chemicals but rather to point out the folly of taking a phrase like "suspected carcinogen" at face value as representing the kind of hazard that it will appear to do to the uninformed public mind reading summaries of this kind. The net result of this blunderbuss approach will, I am sure, be the imposition of intolerable additional cost in the prosecution of exactly that health oriented research which hopefully might be directed at the solution of these same health problems. So, it really is that approach and not the ends that I hope I can bring to your more sympathetic consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

cc: Mr. Jim Bitter
Dr. David K. Parkinson